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ALEX MCKNIGHT AND STACIE ZERDECKI, EUR/WE
OSD FOR CHRIS SKALUBA AND MAGGIE SADOWSKA
EUCOM FOR CDR ERIK STOHLMAN
JOINT STAFF FOR LTC THERESE PAWLOWSKI

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SUBJECT: DASD TOWNSEND OPTIMISTIC AFTER HIGH LEVEL DEFENSE
TALKS WITH SPAIN

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Arnold A. Chacon, for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy Jim Townsend concluded two days of discussions November 18 by telling his counterpart, Spanish Secretary General for Defense Policy Luis Cuesta, he was optimistic after what he called a "meeting of the minds." During the Fifth High Level Defense Committee (HLDC) meetings held in Madrid, the two addressed operations in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the Balkans as well as preliminary approaches to the NATO Strategic Concept, opportunities for collaboration on ballistic missile defense, Spain's defense priorities for its 2010 EU presidency, and the current state of bilateral defense cooperation. Though the Agreement on Defense Cooperation (ADC) calls for annual HLDC meetings, last held in June 2008 in Annapolis (ref A), Townsend told Cuesta he would welcome more frequent, informal conversations on those and other topics. While in Madrid, Townsend also met with MFA Director General for Strategic Affairs and Terrorism Carmen Bujan and her team, engaged with eminent academics and security thinktanks, and gave an exclusive interview to Spain's leading circulation daily. END SUMMARY.

//COMPARING NOTES WITH MFA//

[1](#)2. (C) DG for Strategic Affairs and Terrorism Carmen Bujan, who welcomed DASD Townsend the afternoon of November 17, echoed and empathized with Townsend's own experiences and understandings -- whether on the difficulty of strategic planning in a firefighting environment or on the critical role of Turkey in the success of NATO's new strategic concept. Townsend congratulated Bujan on the November 17 release of the Basque fishing vessel Alakrana (ref) that had been seized by Somali pirates October 2. Bujan acknowledged that piracy had consumed much of her time since she assumed her present post in June 2008. Efforts to counter piracy were a prime example of the need for EU-NATO complementarity, she said, pointing to the lack of a legal platform within NATO (despite resources and political will) to deal with pirates. Even Spain was just now revising its penal code to

allow for the prosecution of alleged pirates, in response to recent crises. In counter piracy and in other missions, Bujan noted Europeans should be able to choose from among the best resources available and acknowledged that the 27 and 28 member states were stretched thin with the same resources directed into two different baskets. She touted NATO's military solutions and lessons learned compared to the European Union's expertise in civilian missions and crisis management. Townsend asked Bujan about plans for Spain's EU presidency and opportunities for institution building during the critical six-month period that will include implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Bujan noted it was high time for a "mature" European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and saw the inherent opportunity for Spain to lead EU efforts to coincide with NATO's development of a new Strategic Concept.

//NEW NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT//

¶3. (C) Townsend sought GOS views on efforts to produce a new NATO Strategic Concept (SC) by the 2010 Summit that would focus NATO on the challenges and threats of the 21st Century.

He shared a sense of urgency following the first two of four Experts Group seminars. He wondered aloud about our political ambitions for the Alliance. Both MFA and MOD interlocutors participated energetically and agreed with Townsend that discussions at this stage were timely, constructive, and essential. In fact, the MFA had reached out to leading Spanish think tanks to bring them into the discussion with policymakers rather than just talking among themselves. (NOTE: Key Embassy contacts who were invited to the seminar hosted by the strategic affairs directorate on

the morning of November 18 said they felt compelled to attend the session because it was such a rare occasion.)

¶4. (C) For her part, Carmen Bujan acknowledged the 1999 SC was hard-fought and included what was needed at the time, but said it needed to be updated. She said that Turkey had asked Spain to organize a preparatory seminar during its EU presidency, but lamented that Turkey needed to give the GOS something to work with. When MFA interlocutors half-joked to Townsend, "Spain will deliver the EU if the United States will deliver Turkey," Townsend sympathized but regretted neither the United States nor anyone but Turkey could do the latter. Bujan responded favorably to Townsend's position that NATO be seen as a "security" (not just defense) organization, sophisticated enough to deal with both military issues and broader security for all -- not "against" any named enemies. She also highlighted the importance of EU-NATO linkages in approaching new crises. When Townsend expressed interest in a single paragraph in the Strategic Concept to describe how the EU and NATO will relate to each other, Bujan and her team were surprised. They imagined a "short" document of 17 pages, 15 at the very least. Townsend pushed back with good humor, saying the United States hoped the process would produce a concept of no more than five pages.

¶5. (C) Specifying during the November 18 HLDC that the Spanish MFA will have the lead on the NATO SC effort, Cuesta and his team also argued for updating the 1999 concept, making it as explicit as possible regarding threats and challenges. Cuesta explained that MOD would participate in the GOS working group insofar as transformation and capacities were MOD's domain. Cuesta lauded good elements of the 1999 document, noting especially that it was achieved by consensus. Tempting as it might be not to re-open the debate, Cuesta agreed the existing concept should be updated to include new threats. He said the overall length of the document was not as important as its simplicity and clarity.

Spain will propose that NATO identify threats as mostly asymmetric, non-state, and terrorist-focused and that it define and evaluate challenges. Cuesta outlined priority areas for the Alliance he expected to be a part of the Spanish approach to the drafting, with an emphasis on Eurasia, North Africa, Europe, and the North Atlantic. Cuesta also identified Article V as a pillar of the Alliance

and hoped SC could strike a balance between collective defense and more visible Allied Article V commitments with limited crisis management and new shared security tasks. The 2010 SC should elaborate on where NATO can add value and use complementary mechanisms to cooperate with the EU. Last but not least, while NATO does not need new agreements or treaties, the Alliance should deepen partnership ties, especially with nations who share Euro-Atlantic values, Russia, and Mediterranean Dialogue partners.

¶6. (C) Townsend emphasized Spain would be in a unique position as EU president at a critical time for NATO as an institution. He noted Spain would be "in charge" at the EU just as NATO had to be able to draft a text in the next few months. He previewed for the Spanish side Washington's key interagency interlocutors on the new Strategic Concept and mentioned that the United States would host in February 2010 the Experts Group meeting on capabilities at the National Defense University. While he agreed with most of the views presented by Cuesta and, previously, Bujan, Townsend offered to highlight the differences between the U.S. and Spanish approach at this point, among them audience, specificity, and length. The new Strategic Concept should be written not for practitioners but for Alliance publics and public opinion makers. With the change in generations and growing distance from the Cold War, Townsend stressed publics should be made to understand the commitment inherent in Article 5. He imagined the Strategic Concept would arm political leadership in NATO capitals to make the case for NATO.

¶7. (C) In terms of specificity, he stressed the new Concept ought to be longer on vision, with fewer details and specifics that could be better addressed in other NATO

documents such as Ministerial Guidance. Townsend noted the new Concept had to be able to survive the ebb and flow of time. Though it should address global partnerships and threats, it had to be flexible and nimble enough to handle the unknown. For that reason and because we face a full range of threats, he argued the Strategic Concept should not "name names" of the nations or groups that are seen today by some Allies as threats.

¶8. (C) As to the document's length, and as with the MFA discussion, Townsend said the United States hoped for a shorter document, and he personally would like to see a maximum of five pages. He said NATO needed something shorter, more pointed, and more substantive than a Summit statement that could put doubts to rest about NATO's reasons d'etre, address issues, and show confidence in Article 5. Deputy Director General for Defense Policy Admiral Perez Ramirez, who had worked on the previous Strategic Concept, responded that the problem with the 1999 document was a lack of clarity. He argued the new document should "specify a bit more, not a bit less" in order to prevent each nation's applying the concept to its national security issues alone.

//MISSILE DEFENSE//

¶9. (C) Both at MFA November 17 and during the HLDC the next day, the Spanish sought details of the new U.S. approach to ballistic missile defense (BMD) unveiled September 17. MFA Special Ambassador for Disarmament Miguel Aguirre de Carcer asked Townsend November 17 whether BMD was a priority of the Obama Administration in the lead up to the 2010 NATO Summit, and asked specifically what role the U.S. Navy would play in the Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA).

¶10. (C) In describing his career-long familiarity with evolving Missile Defense policy, Townsend underscored the bipartisan U.S. support for strong missile defenses and the understanding shared by both the current and previous U.S. administrations, updated to include new analysis, of the threat posed by Iran. He held the Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) was an improvement over previous plans made possible by changes in technology and in that it allowed for cooperation with partners like Spain and greater opportunities for Allies and friends to participate. He said the United States would

welcome all Allies, involvement in the PAA and in broader NATO territorial missile defense efforts and expressed hope that the December 3-4 NATO Foreign Ministers' ministerial would yield a short statement of political acceptance (and "insurance policy" ahead of the 2010 Summit in Lisbon) to proceed to elaborate a NATO-wide BMD effort as the best way to defend Europe from current and emerging ballistic missile threats. He welcomed speculation about the enhanced role that Spain, which has AEGIS, could play in such an effort. As with the NATO Strategic Concept, Townsend underlined the flexible nature of the PAA to address not only the present Iranian threat, but future unknown threats.

¶11. (C) The Spanish MOD delegation stressed indivisibility, saying it was important the PAA system be shared. Spain also expressed concern about non-state actors closer to home, using North Africa as an example, as threats more "real" to Spain than North Korea or Iran. General Raggio wondered aloud about costs and about possible participation by more advanced Allies, asking Townsend whether the United States had thought about how to make BMD more "fascinating" to countries (like Spain) that have AEGIS. The Spanish Defense Attache to Washington, General Vaquero, pointed out that only 18 ships, 15 of which are in the Pacific, had SM3 capability. The U.S. side said partners would be key and emphasized that participation in NATO missile defense will come down to national decisions and that NATO as an alliance will have to decide whether it wants to provide territorial missile defense.

//AFGHANISTAN//

¶12. (C) The HLDC agenda included opportunities to discuss current operations in Afghanistan and Lebanon (on both of which topics Spain took the lead), and a U.S.-led segment on the Balkans. Starting with Afghanistan, Spain agreed with all four points of the COM ISAF assessment (e.g., protect population; train and equip ASF; strengthen governments and institutions; regional approach, involving Pakistan and other neighbors). Spain currently has 1200 forces deployed, to reduce to approximately 1000 by the end of 2009 (with the redeployment of 450 Election Security Forces and increase of permanent contingent by 220). Spain reviewed its contributions: the PRT in Badghis (approximately 45 million euros); security detachment at Kabul Airport (October 2009 to April 2010); two OMLTs, to increase to three by the end of 2009; and 40 Guardia Civil deploying in first quarter 2010 with the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF).

¶13. (C) Cuesta emphasized Spanish concerns about Afghan President Karzai, corruption, and the importance of a regional focus in both military and civilian efforts. USD-P-equivalent Cuesta assessed that Karzai would be increasingly nationalistic in his second term, and increasingly antagonistic toward the international community. The U.S. delegation emphasized to Spain the USG's sensitivity to keeping an international face on the ISAF mission, noting the deployment of Spanish Guardia Civil to the police mentoring mission as a huge step forward. DASD Townsend expressed U.S. anticipation for future cooperation "both civilian and military" with Spain following President Obama's forthcoming decision on Afghanistan strategy.

//Colombian Deployment to ISAF//

¶14. (C) Director General for Defense Policy General Benito Raggio reported the new Colombian Defense Minister was revisiting an agreement reached with Spain to deploy with ISAF. The previous Colombian DefMin had agreed to deploy before Christmas 2009 a small advance party of officers to Herat and had agreed to two deployments of approximately 40 soldiers each, one in 2010 and one in 2011. Spain reports having reached agreement on expenses to be paid to Colombian forces as well as equipment, training, and legal arrangements. Spain confirmed GOS intent to reimburse the United States for strategic lift of Colombian forces in the event the new Colombian DefMin goes ahead with the

deployment.

//LEBANON//

¶15. (C) Cuesta pointed to UNIFIL, where Spain currently had 1100 troops, as evidence of Spain's serious commitment to Middle East stability. He noted the confidence and trust of the international community in Spain's ability to replace Italy. Specifically he said the Southeast Brigade (where Spain has been operating) was a delicate region that has gained Spanish forces experience and respect of the IDF and Lebanese government. Cuesta saw a window of opportunity for Spain to take command of UNIFIL during Spain's 2010 European Union (EU) Presidency, when he expected the GOS would have increased leverage to draw EU attention to Lebanon. Cuesta also noted that Lebanese government would be forced to take a moderate position, as they become Security Council members over the next two years.

¶16. (C) Spain has put forth two candidates to interview with the UN for command of UNIFIL, which is to begin in February 2010. The Spanish delegation was unaware of any specifics on Italy's intent to reduce forces in UNIFIL after handing command over to Spain. Cuesta made it clear Spain would not necessarily make up for any force-level "gap" caused by redeployed Italian forces. After Spain commits its additional personnel, the Spanish will look to the UN to call upon the international community to backfill an Italian reduction in forces. (Note: MOD reported 1005 Spanish forces and 12 Civil Guards deployed under UNIFIL as of November 13. End note.) Included in the total Spanish forces to Lebanon will be approximately 300 enablers (e.g., helicopter support, headquarters staff and force protection; intelligence, forensics, Civil-Military support; advisors, etc.) that Spain reports have already begun training for a Jan-Feb 2010

deployment. DASD Townsend inquired about the quality of dialogue between Spain and Italy for this hand-over, which Cuesta affirmed was "good," although he could not speak to specific Italian plans for future force presence beyond the headquarters element enablers.

//BOSNIA//

¶17. (C) Cuesta told Townsend that Spain would stay in Althea "until the end of the operation" and maintain its 15 percent troop share. When pressed about the potential transition of the mission, Cuesta assured Townsend that Spain would undertake no unilateral withdrawal. Cuesta nonetheless echoed public statements by Defense Minister Carme Chacon that Operation Althea had achieved all its military objectives, and he held that remaining problems should be solved politically. During its EU presidency, Spain will support transforming EUFOR into a technical assistance and training mission. Cuesta suggested that EUFOR would keep a strategic reserve force over the horizon to react to any violence if need be. Though he assured the U.S. delegation that Spain would remain involved, Cuesta hoped that EU members would agree on a "temporal horizon," looking toward October 2010 elections in Bosnia. Townsend expressed U.S. concerns (ref B) about potential future conflict. Cuesta said that for Spain, the future of the Balkans was regional integration, and that the potential to join NATO and/or the EU would be the greatest incentive to reform and set aside differences. He countered Townsend's concerns by saying the Dayton accords had kept Bosnia calm and stable and disagreed, based on Chacon's October visit to Sarajevo, that a transition of the EU mission could ignite old ethnic tensions. (NOTE: Spain has 265 troops deployed under EUFOR and 37 Civil Guards in Bosnia. Minister Chacon announced September 20 on Spanish radio that Spanish troops would return from the mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina "as soon as possible," not later than 2010. Cuesta's comments suggest Spain would seek EU consensus for such a position. END NOTE.)

//SPANISH EU PRESIDENCY//

¶18. (C) Townsend repeatedly called the first half of 2010 an exciting opportunity for Spanish leadership. Cuesta saw Spain's EU presidency as an opportunity to improve EU-NATO cooperation and to strengthen transatlantic cooperation. Cuesta also acknowledged that as the first country to hold the rotating presidency after the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, Spain will need to start developing the institutions of the treaty and pushing the civil-military capabilities of the EU. He said Spain hoped to begin a reflection on mechanisms to achieve permanent structured cooperation. Cuesta further argued for reinforcing the decision-making capacity of the European Council of Defense Ministers, pointing out that despite the European Strategy updated in December 2008, EU battlegroups, established in January 2007, had yet to be deployed. He said Spain had ideas for how to improve EU capabilities in order to provide more incentives for countries to participate. Asked whether Spain would emphasize EU operations in Afghanistan during its presidency, especially after the Swedish and French presidencies, Cuesta suggested the EU was more likely to apply its civil capabilities.

¶19. (C) Touching on efforts to combat Somali piracy, Cuesta said the Spanish EU presidency would call both a technical seminar on piracy and an international conference on Somalia aimed at increasing international funding for development and strengthening security structures, in support of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's broader roadmap. Spain also hopes to host a seminar on maritime surveillance. Cuesta noted the EU had designated five admirals to write a report on improving counter-piracy coordination. He reported the EU had approved November 17 a non-executive mission, which Spain will lead, to train 2000 Somali forces in Uganda. Townsend lauded Spanish leadership in this arena and urged the GOS during its presidency to coordinate with NATO. NOTE: Cuesta traveled to the Seychelles November 19 with the families of captured

crew members of the Basque fishing vessel Alakrana, which was released by pirates November 17 (ref D). END NOTE.

//AGREEMENT ON DEFENSE COOPERATION//

¶20. (C) Cuesta said the GOS was satisfied with the Agreement on Defense Cooperation (ADC), was currently analyzing its implementation and possible technical adjustments, and would broach the subject again in summer 2010 after Spain completes its EU presidency. Rear Admiral Carlos Galindo Jimenez, President of the Spanish Section of the Spain-U.S. Permanent Committee, conveyed that Spain considers the ADC "successful in general" and will seek to extend it year-to-year upon its expiration in February 2011. (NOTE: the current ADC, upon expiration in 2011, is automatically extended one year at a time unless one of the parties gives a 6-month notice to terminate or re-negotiate. END NOTE.) Spain prefers not to draw unnecessary public attention to the basing agreement and hopes to avoid re-negotiation. Galindo did not go into detail about the "technical adjustments" to the ADC Spain plans to recommend, but mentioned suppression of some articles and annexes that are "obsolete" or are covered already in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) or ones that the GOS feels can be addressed via other means, such as an memorandum of understanding or a diplomatic note. Galindo mentioned adjustments to the annex on NASA abort landings (4-6 per year), reciprocity on jurisdiction, labor and tax laws, and on minor misconduct. Without implying or accusing the United States of violating the ADC, MFA Subdirector General for North American Affairs Fernando Prieto reminded the U.S. delegation that any rendition flights via Rota or Moron would be unacceptable to the Spanish Parliament.

//MEDIA PLACEMENT//

¶21. (SBU) DASD Townsend's interview with defense correspondent Andrea Rizzi of leading daily El Pais appeared on page 4 of the paper's November 27 edition under the headline "Europe is not doing enough in the (Afghanistan)

conflict," below other articles about NATO's request for additional troops. Townsend told the paper that the United States would love for Europe to do more and conceded all the Allies had to do more. The paper quotes Townsend, "The United States will provide the troops, but we expect the Allies to also contribute to delivering what NATO considers necessary." The article also touches on current U.S. plans for missile defense and asserts that transatlantic relations remain a priority for the Obama Administration.

¶22. (U) DASD Townsend cleared this message.
CHACON